

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

C. Amendments to the Claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of verifying a reticle, comprising the steps of:

5 forming a conformal layer over a non-resist deposited layer that is formed
on a uniform surface, the non-resist deposited layer including a reticle pattern, at
least a portion of the reticle pattern extending through the non-resist
deposited layer; and
inspecting the reticle pattern for defects.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

10 the conformal layer comprises a conductive material.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein:

the conformal layer comprises titanium.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein:

15 the conformal layer comprises a layer of titanium nitride formed over a
layer of titanium.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein:

the reticle pattern in the deposited layer includes features having a
minimum size L, and the conformal layer has a thickness of no more than 1/2L.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein:

20 the conformal layer has a thickness of no more than 1000Å.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the non-resist deposited layer comprises silicon oxide.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein:

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the non-resist deposited layer comprises a layer of undoped silicon dioxide formed on a layer of phosphosilicate glass.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the thickness of the non-resist deposited layer is greater than 2500Å.

5 10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the thickness of the non-resist deposited layer is greater than 5000Å.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the uniform surface comprises a silicon substrate.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of verifying a reticle, comprising the steps of:

10 forming a conductive conformal layer greater than 100Å over a deposited layer patterned with a reticle, at least a portion of a reticle pattern extending through the deposited layer; and

inspecting the reticle pattern in the deposited layer.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein:

15 inspecting the reticle pattern comprises automatically inspecting the reticle pattern with pattern inspection equipment.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein:

20 automatically inspecting the reticle pattern includes automatically aligning a wafer in the pattern inspection equipment with the pattern formed in the deposited layer.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein:

the reticle pattern comprises a contact reticle pattern.

16. (Original) The method of claim 12, further including:

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patterning the deposited layer with the reticle includes
patterning a layer of resist formed over the deposited layer with
the reticle pattern,
etching the deposited layer, and
5 removing the resist.

17. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

forming at least one reticle patterned layer on a uniform surface including
at least a portion of a reticle pattern extending through the reticle patterned
layer; and

10 increasing an inspection contrast between patterned and non-patterned
portions of the reticle patterned layer by forming a conformal layer over the reticle
patterned layer; and

inspecting the reticle patterned layer.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein:

15 forming at least one reticle patterned layer on a uniform surface comprises
depositing a silicon oxide containing layer.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein:

forming the conformal layer comprises depositing a conductive conformal
layer.

20 20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein:

the conductive conformal layer comprises an interconnect adhering layer.

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